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I.—SPEECH-MIXTURE IN FRENCH CANADA. EXTERNAL INFLUENCE.

In the introductory article,¹ a glance was given at the early history of the Province of Quebec, in order that something of the original dialect-elements of the present speech of French Canada might be understood, and that the general characteristics which mark the east and west zones of the Gallic idiom, as it exists in the Dominion, might be clearly kept in view for the investigation which is to follow. It would be not only interesting but fascinating to develop this sketch of the history of a people whose every struggle for national existence has been characterized by the noblest self-sacrifice, by the highest personal valor and, above all, by the profoundest sense of the importance to them of their religion and language. The motto *Notre Langue, Notre Religion et Nos Coutumes* has been ever present with them, and to it their hearts have been tuned when the power of the oppressor has threatened to crush them. It would be instructive, in the interest of the general subject of language, to discuss the sundry attempts made by their rulers to tear away from them this heritage, their strongest and safest bulwark as a distinct and separate people. The suppression of French schools, the prohibition of French in all governmental relations, the refusal of the dominant race to learn French, the contempt in which the proud sons of Gaul were held—all of these would form interesting and instructive chapters where might be portrayed the unswerving tenacity of purpose, the strong character and the bold disregard of danger on the part of the French in the most trying circumstances when religion and

¹ See Vol. VI, p. 135 seq. of this Journal.

language have been at stake. But such discussions would carry us too far from the special object of the present work, which is to treat the language as actually found in the Canadian provinces.

Could we stop at the broad lines of demarcation as indicated for the dialects in the preliminary study just referred to; could we take into account the few linguistic varieties only that constituted the original speech-compound, we should find it no very difficult task to trace the interlacing threads of these language-forms and to note their reciprocal influences in the production of existing types; but the problem here is conditioned by incomparably greater difficulties. The individual dialects that were brought to these shores by the earliest settlers serve simply as so many definite and well-determined *points d'appui*, as so many trusty landmarks in the labyrinth of a linguistic mixture that was the natural outgrowth of constant and promiscuous immigration for more than one hundred and fifty years. It is fortunate for the investigator that he has these fixed points in the field of his observation, otherwise much of his searching would be in vain, and much of what he might think to be real discovery would be only conjecture with reference to the great mass of his many-colored and perplexing material.

We find at work in Canada all those agencies which produce speech-mixture among languages where the types are more distinct and where the relations of these types have settled into that special mould that marks the separation of language from dialect. Of course, the more intimate the relation between any two forms of speech, the more easy is the passage of the one to the other, provided they both belong to the same generic stock; and it is this position, as we shall see further on, which the set of dialects of the Province of Quebec holds with reference to the varieties of speech that belong particularly to the maritime provinces; that is, instead of being distinctly individual languages, they must be regarded as different phases of one general speech, but possessing at the same time characteristics sufficiently marked to individualize them and make them represent, for all working purposes, two distinct forms of language. I shall consider, therefore, this subject of speech-mixture under the various headings that mark the natural mingling of linguistic forms, such as the influence of the purely external circumstances of life and the influence of divergent linguistic products upon one another. It may easily happen, in certain cases, that the second part of this classification is contained in or conditioned by the first; in truth, precisely here in Canada we shall

note how it is that peculiar circumstances of life have especially contributed to certain developments of speech that could never have existed had it not been for their concurrence at a given time in the political, social and religious experiences of the people. And nowhere else, perhaps, have these cardinal functions of organic growth in civilized society acted more powerfully toward the production of a composite language. It is here, if anywhere, that we must carefully consider the reflex of the feudal system in language-making; it is here that the social and religious life, bound together into an indissoluble whole, have left their indelible stamp upon the speech, from the humblest peasant who left France to act the part of pioneer of French civilization on the American continent, down to his peaceable, hard-working, frugal, self-sacrificing descendant of to-day, the *habitant*, who no longer rejoices in the *patois* of his ancestor, but who has risen, without effort and unsuspectingly, to a higher plane in the scale of linguistic development.

The mere circumstance of bringing together emigrants for the New World from several of the chief departments of France, in an age where the means of communication among the different linguistic centres were slow and laborious, and when, consequently, the varieties of idiom were much more marked than we now have them—this condition of things alone, I say, was sufficient to produce important changes in the language of inhabitants who, before this, had never come into any social relation with one another, and whose necessary contact and more or less intimate association after they had once planted foot upon American soil afforded an opportunity to take the initial steps in that *Ausgleichung* of grammar-forms and intermixture of phonetic elements which are found to-day in the Canadian language, common in all essential particulars to the provinces of the Dominion, wherever French is spoken.¹

¹ I shall not be anticipating here too much a special treatment of that phase of the Canadian French, generally known as the Acadian, which exists in the maritime provinces—Nova Scotia (including Cape Breton, Isle Madame), New Brunswick and Prince Edward—and the original sources of which were the *Langue d'Oc* dialects, if I state in this connection that the common notion held with reference to it is erroneous—namely, that it is a clearly defined dialect variety with so marked characteristics as to be easily distinguishable from its sister on the lower St. Lawrence. For the most part, it does not constitute to-day a dialect species so sharply separated from the current Canadian idiom as to entitle it to the dignity of being regarded as a separate and independent

Another feature, furthermore, of the mixed society must be borne in mind, as it will help to explain how the process of social amalgamation was carried forward with so universal success. I refer to the superior character of the earliest settlers. The originators of the emigration movement in France, and the later directors of the Canadian colonization projects, were men of integrity, of broad views, and of extended experience in foreign lands. They were property-holders themselves, and hence understood the advantages that would accrue to the new communities by having such only of their subjects to follow them as had the means to subsist, and as had sufficient intelligence to easily adapt themselves to the circumstances of their new life. The wise and proper selection of peasants, therefore, for the first ships that sailed from the Old World to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, was of paramount importance to the leaders of an enterprise fraught with so many dangers at that time. The "rank and file" of these pioneers were naturally chosen, then, from the more prosperous and thrifty class of the common folk, and thus, at the very start of the colonies, favorable conditions existed for the immediate growth of a form of language more homogeneous than that which existed in the mother country, where the social elements were more diverse and consequently less congenial. And that not only a strong tendency to uniformity of speech actually did develop among these colonists, but also that the results of it were surprising, is manifest from the testimony of sundry writers before the Conquest in 1760. In truth, some of them go so far as to maintain that better French was spoken on the banks of the St. Lawrence than in France itself, and account in part for this extraordinary state of things by the less mixed character of society and the large proportion of educated persons who had joined the expeditions to the American Continent.

The Récollet father Chrétien Leclercq, referring to this subject, says: "I could scarcely understand when a celebrated man [Father Germain Allard, afterward Bishop of Vence] said to me one day that I should be surprised to find in Canada so nice a people

order of linguistic growth. That fundamental differences did once exist between the two must be admitted, but the levelling process has been so widespread as to have done away with many of the originally distinctive marks of the South French of which it was formerly a part. In truth, as we shall see hereafter, we often find to our surprise, in these Acadian districts, that both the phonetics and morphology are nearer the model of the North French than the language of the Province of Quebec, where the *Langue d'Oil* dialects were the sources drawn on from the beginning for the speech-material.

[*d'honnêtes gens*]; that he did not know another province of the Kingdom where there was more intelligence, sagacity [*pénétration*] and politeness on the part of the people; and added that we should even find there a very polished language, with clear and distinct enunciation and a pronunciation without accent. But when I was on the spot, I recognized that they had not exaggerated anything to me, New France being in this respect more fortunate than the colonies established in other parts of the world."

The Mère de l'Incarnation (whose acquaintance we shall make a little further on), one of the most celebrated characters connected with the early history of Canada, also said what was repeated in substance by Charlevoix: "Nowhere else do they speak our language more purely: one cannot note here the least accent." The annalist, Bacqueville de la Poterie, bears testimony to the same fact. "Although," she says, "there is here a mixture from all the provinces of France, one cannot distinguish the speech of any one of them in particular among the Canadians."

Again, we call upon the Abbé D'Olivet. He writes: "One might send an opera to Canada and it could be sung at Quebec, note for note, just as in Paris; but you could not send a conventional phrase to Bordeaux or Montpellier and find that it would be pronounced syllable for syllable as at the Court."

In fact, under the Comte de Frontenac a certain Sieur de Mareuil gave theatrical representations at Quebec, and, according to Isidore Lebrun, Lascarbot had 'Le Triomphe de Neptune' played at Port-Royal, which is a very much greater source of astonishment, considering the districts of France whence were drawn the inhabitants of this city.

Sieur Franquet, Royal Commissary, in writing to France about the women of the Province, says: "They are generally very intelligent and speak a pure French without the slightest accent. Accomplished and gay, they converse in a very agreeable manner."

But it was not the people of their own race alone who found that the Canadians spoke good French. The learned Swedish traveller Kalm, speaking of how sensitive the women were about their language, makes the following remark: "The ladies and girls of Canada, and particularly those of Montreal, are disposed to laugh at the mistakes that foreigners make in speaking their language. Here French is rarely spoken except by the Gallic race, for there are very few foreigners, and the savages, naturally too proud to learn French, oblige the colonists to learn their language. It thus

happens, therefore, that the ladies of Canada cannot hear any peculiar or extraordinary mode of speech without laughing."¹

We shall note, further on, the special influence of the clergy and of their educational institutions on the language. What we want to understand first is that the character of the mass of the people in these colonies of the North originally differed very materially from that which we find in most other settlements of European colonization at that time. It was no penal colony; they were no set of political convicts or social misdemeanants² sent out to be gotten rid of by the home government, but were serious, hard-working, thrifty citizens, representing the cream of their society, just as their leaders, spiritual and temporal, represented the bluest blood that France had to offer in those days. That they found a better world on this side of the Atlantic is natural, all things being considered, since their relations to their masters were less exacting here and the chances for a more generous existence were at hand.

In truth, it may be asserted, I think, without fear of contradiction, that never in the history of the Canadian colonies were these people reduced to such a state of misery and ignorance as La Bruyère mentions in his *Les Caractères ou les Mœurs de ce Siècle*: "L'on voit certains animaux farouches, des mâles et des femelles, répandus par la campagne, noirs, livides et tout brûlés du soleil, attachés à la terre qu'ils fouillent et qu'ils remuent avec une opiniâtreté invincible; ils ont comme une voix articulée, et quand ils se lèvent sur leurs pieds, ils montrent une face humaine, et en effet ils sont des hommes. Ils se retirent la nuit dans les tanières, où ils vivent de pain noir, d'eau et de racines; ils épargnent aux autres hommes la peine de semer, de labourer et de recueillir pour

¹ For these items bearing specially upon the purity of the French as spoken by the early settlers of Canada, I am indebted to an interesting monograph (now out of print) furnished me by the author, M. Bibaud *fils*, of Montreal, entitled: *Le Mémorial des Vicissitudes et des Progrès de la Langue française en Canada*. Montréal, 1879.

² I am aware that the Marquis de la Roche is said to have ransacked the prisons of France, whence he collected a set of ruffians, robbers and cut-throats, who accompanied him to the New World. This, however, was among the earliest attempts to found a French settlement on these shores, and, besides being confined to the small Isle du Sable, off the coast of Nova Scotia, the company that landed consisted of only forty men, who, through privations and the rigors of the climate, finally perished, or went back home after a few years. The project, then, to start the colony with convicts miscarried. Cf. Francis Parkman, *Pioneers of France in the New World*, pp. 210-12.

vivre, et méritent ainsi de ne pas manquer de ce pain qu'ils ont semé."¹

Few, if any, of this class ever joined the wanderers across the ocean, even in the latter days of exclusive French rule, and to-day not a trace or reminiscence of such abject wretchedness is to be found with the *habitant* of Canada, whose Norman instincts manifest themselves in the acquisition of this world's goods. His neighbors, the Bretons, used to say of him that he did not pray for wealth, but only to be placed near somebody that had it.² I am borne out in the expression of the above opinion concerning the character of the early peasant in New France by no less authority also than the Hon. P. J. O. Chauveau, one of the most celebrated writers of Canada to-day, who was for eighteen years at the head of the Department of Public Instruction for Lower Canada and for the Province of Quebec. In his admirable work on public instruction in Canada,³ he says: "On aurait tort de croire que la population des campagnes a été, à n'importe quelle époque, dans cette ignorance absolue et abrutissante dont on est encore frappé chez les basses classes de quelques pays européens. Dès les premiers temps, un grand nombre de colons arrivaient au Canada tout instruits, et les vieux registres conservés à Québec et à Montréal établissent qu'une forte proportion d'entre eux savait écrire. Leur éducation domestique était, en général, excellente, et les traditions de la famille canadienne, entretenues et ravivées par l'enseignement religieux, suppléèrent assez longtemps au manque d'écoles. Bien des mères de famille, instruites par les Soeurs de la Congrégation, se firent les institutrices de leurs propres enfants, garçons aussi bien que filles."

Again: "En très-grand nombre, les premiers colons étaient instruits . . . Mais ils avaient mieux que cela, c'était une génération forte et formée aux traditions religieuses et sociales du pays, à cette époque le plus civilisé et le plus éclairé de l'Europe. L'éducation domestique, la première, la plus essentielle, celle à laquelle l'instruction, n'importe à quel degré, ne supplée que difficilement, ne supplée aucunement si elle n'est appuyée sur l'idée religieuse, l'éducation de ces premiers colons était excellente et c'est elle qui,

¹ Œuvres de La Bruyère. Nouvelle édition par M. G. Servois. De L'Homme, Vol. II, p. 61.

² Atlantic Monthly, XLVIII 773.

³ L'Instruction Publique au Canada. Précis historique et statistique par M. Chauveau, ancien ministre de l'instruction publique dans le Province de Québec. Québec, Coté et Cie., 1876, p. 56.

transmise d'âge en âge, a valu à leurs descendants le titre de peuple gentilhomme."¹

But there was no difficulty for the peasant in Canada to acquire a liberal means of subsistence after the colony had once taken a foothold there; his social status was greatly improved by his constant and intimate relations with those of his own class, and his language was bettered by the friendly and democratic conditions in which he lived with his lord.

The Intendant, Jacques Duchesneau, who received his commission in 1675, wrote four years later (November 10, 1679)—that is, after he had become thoroughly acquainted with the country in his official capacity—to the Minister Colbert: "As for such of the laboring class as apply themselves steadily to the cultivation of the soil, they not only live very well, but are incomparably better off than the better sort of peasants in France."² The Canadian seigneur belonged to the best stock in France; he was a kind master, and showed by his intercourse with the people that he appreciated their honesty and intrepidity as pioneers of a new colonization.

We have already seen³ how the land was parcelled out by the seigneurs and the consequent more or less friendly association between him and his tenants. The seignorial tenure carried with it certain privileges and rights which must be noted here more particularly if we would understand this source of external influence on the language. In the very first conveyance of land to a colonist—father of the Hébert family, whose acquaintance we have already made—we find traces of the *Coutumes de Paris*, which was the law before the civil tribunals established at Quebec, Montreal and Three Rivers. This was in 1626, and it was not till nearly four decades (1663⁴) later that the principle became established for the whole country by the first *concession en fief* made to Robert

¹ Discours sur l'Instruction Publique en Canada prononcé à la Convention canadienne de 1874.

² Francis Parkman, *The Old Régime in Canada*, p. 381.

³ *American Journal of Philology*, Vol. VI, p. 148.

⁴ At the beginning of this year, it will be remembered, the Company of the Hundred Associates (noticed below), in a resolution signed by fifteen of its members, "a arrêté que . . . serait fait une démission entre les mains de Sa Majesté, de la propriété et seigneurie du dit pays (la Nouvelle-France) appartenant à la dite Compagnie, pour en disposer par Sa Majesté comme il lui plaira, se rapportant à son équité et bonne justice, d'accorder un dédommagement proportionné aux dépenses que la dite Compagnie a faites pour le bien et l'avantage du dit pays."—*Édits et Ordonnances Royaux*, Vol. I, p. 30.

Giffard, Seigneur de Beauport. This period must be kept in mind, as in it the form of government in Canada began to shape itself definitely, and the feudal *régime* was saddled upon the colonist to the exclusion of all other species of political and social polity. The year following the first private land-grant (1627) a contract was signed between Richelieu and the Compagnie des Cents Associés (or de la Nouvelle-France) in virtue of which the latter were to enjoy the colony "à perpétuité, en toute propriété, justice et seigneurie."

This edict is of special interest for us, since in the very first article of agreement it is stipulated that this Company shall transport to Canada, beginning with the next year (1628), three hundred men of all professions, and shall increase this number to four thousand men and women in the succeeding fifteen years; and again, in Section IV of the same, in order to recompense the Company for its great expense in this enterprise, the extraordinary grant is mentioned, as just given, of "le fort et habitation de Québec avec tout le dit pays de la Nouvelle-France, dite Canada, tant le long des côtes depuis la Floride . . . jusqu'au cercle arctique," etc. Besides many other special rights and privileges, this all-powerful Association had for these fifteen years the exclusive control of the fur-trade (Article VII); all sorts of merchandise and products of industry coming from it were to be free of duty (Article XIV), and twelve *lettres de noblesse* were issued for such leading members and their families (to be continued to their descendants forever) as did not belong to this rank in the native country (Article XIV). Here we have, then, the supreme power of government vested in a corporation whose dissolution (1663) was the natural outcome of the greed and abuse of privilege that followed so unrestricted a control of the material interests of this immense territory. But another significant feature of this legal document must not be overlooked—namely, the preliminary statement that the King, wishing to perpetuate the memory and holy purpose of Henri-le-Grand, would strive, with divine assistance, to bring the inhabitants of New France to a knowledge of the true God by having them instructed and trained in the "religion catholique, apostolique et romaine"; and Monseigneur le Cardinal de Richelieu was of opinion that the only means of disposing these savages to the Christian faith was to people the country with Catholics, native of France. Thus was introduced into this scheme of colonization that distinct religious coloring which manifested

itself throughout the brief reign of the Company so decidedly as to stamp it with the characteristic appellation, "mission-period."

This was the charter, then, that established feudal tenure throughout Canada, and it was to cut short the abuses that had arisen under its exclusive and exceptional provisions that the Minister of Louis XIII annulled it and made the following new effort at colonization. On the breaking up of this old colonial "Committee of a Hundred," a Royal Council held sway for a year, composed of a Governor, the highest tributary ecclesiastic of the country, the Intendant and five Councillors. This Council was endued with the same power as that borne by the sovereign court of France, but it was yet too early to rule the colony exclusively by home dictation, and there was consequently no time lost in supplanting it by an organization whose influence was drawn in great measure from its vested interests.

Almost exactly a year after the edict was issued (April, 1663) for the creation of the *conseil souverain*, came the establishment (May, 1664) of the Compagnie des Indes Occidentales, whose powers, privileges and immunities were even greater than those of its predecessor, the Compagnie du Canada. After reciting many breaches of trust, failures to comply with the stipulations of their charter, and other irregularities on the part of this corporation, it is stated to be the intention of His Majesty, in order properly to carry on the commerce of the West Indies, to establish a powerful company, to which he would concede these islands, "celles de Cayenne et de toute la terre ferme de l'Amérique . . . , le Canada, l'Acadie, Isle de Terre-neuve et autres isles et terre ferme, depuis le nord du dit pays de Canada jusqu'à la Virginie et Floride, ensemble toute la côte de l'Afrique depuis le Cap Vert jusqu'au Cap de Bonne Espérance."¹ This company was to be composed especially of those possessing landed property in the regions indicated, and of others who were desirous to join in the development of home-commerce with these foreign parts; and the term of their grant was much more favorable than that of their forerunners, the Hundred Associates, since they were conceded the exclusive privilege of commerce and navigation for forty years, while the latter were shut off originally with but fifteen years, though the existence of this first corporation was finally extended to about the same length of time as that of their more fortunate followers.

But this new ruling power, thus constituted, apparently the

¹ Édits et Ordonnances, Vol. I, p. 40.

special outgrowth of a desire to foster commerce, was not to be confined to the promotion of material interests. A higher purpose is professed in the introductory stipulation, where the same strong religious motive for colonization of the New World is expressed in definite terms: "Comme nous regardons dans l'établissement des dites colonies principalement la gloire de Dieu en procurant le salut des Indiens et Sauvages, auxquels nous désirons faire connoître la vraie religion, la dite compagnie présentement établie sous le nom de 'Compagnie des Indes Occidentales' sera obligée de faire passer aux pays ci-dessus concédés le nombre d'ecclésiastiques nécessaire pour y prêcher le Saint Évangile et instruire ces peuples en la créance de la religion catholique, apostolique et romaine," etc.

In the mode of its organization, however, a striking contrast with that of its predecessor is evident at the first glance, and the pronounced tendency to centralized authority is manifest which soon after developed in France with reference to the government of her colonies and caused the overthrow of this company, to which so much power had originally been given. I allude to Section VIII of their charter, wherein it was specially stipulated that a Board of General Directors, consisting of nine persons, should be established at Paris, and these directors should name the commanding officers (Section XIII) and the clerks necessary for the service of the Company, both at home and abroad. But a still greater innovation on the system of preceding companies, and a feature that specially concerns us here, is the formal introduction (Section XXXIII) of the *Coutume de Paris*: "Seront . . . tenus . . . les officiers de suivre et se conformer à la Coutume de la prévôté et vicomté de Paris, suivant laquelle les habitans pourront contracter sans que l'on y puisse introduire aucune coutume pour éviter la diversité."

But scarcely a decade had passed after the cession of the enormous possessions mentioned above to the West India Company, before we find their charter suddenly revoked by royal edict, and from this time (1674) until the conquest (1760) the Royal Council held exclusive sway. Thus we see the various attempts of the home government to properly rule her colonies on the St. Lawrence were abortive until it assumed the control of them to the exclusion of all private claims to authority, whether by extensive and potent companies or by individuals. In this struggle on the part of the State finally to concentrate within herself the sole jurisdiction of her colonial possessions, instead of delegating it to a

corporation that managed these possessions for the advantage of the interested few, we have sundry forms of local legislation introduced, various social customs developed, and diverse relations established between lord and peasant that are of importance in consideration of the language of rulers and ruled. For while the main tenor of his life was feudalistic, the *habitant* of New France spurned certain duties that were regarded as essential prerogatives of his master in the Old World. Such, for example, was that important feature of feudalism during the heyday of its supremacy—namely, military service, and which was totally unknown in Canada. And just here it may be well to note more particularly a few points in which, through feudal custom, these two elements of society were brought into friendly contact.

The seigneur himself, though naturally upon a footing, with reference to his sovereign, more free in this foreign land than at home, yet had to give evidence every year of his subjection by rendering homage to the king's representative at Quebec, by repeating the oath of allegiance and performing certain other formalities that were required by his royal monarch. He was obliged to acknowledge the right of *quint*, by which a fifth part of the price for any land sold went to the king; but, besides these requirements—and what concerns us especially—he was bound by the *droit de banalité* to build grist-mills on his estate for the use of his tenants. We read in an edict of June 4, 1686, touching these *moulins banaux*:¹ "Le roi étant en son conseil, ayant été informé que la plupart des seigneurs qui possèdent des fiefs dans son pays de la Nouvelle-France négligent de bâtir des moulins banaux nécessaires pour la subsistence des habitants du dit pays, et voulant pourvoir à un défaut si préjudiciable à l'entretien de la colonie, Sa Majesté étant en son conseil, a ordonné et ordonne que tous les seigneurs qui possèdent des fiefs dans l'étendue du dit pays de la Nouvelle-France seront tenus d'y faire construire des moulins banaux dans le tems d'une année après la publication du présent arrêt, et le dit tems passé, faute par eux d'y avoir satisfait, permet Sa Majesté à tous particuliers, de quelque qualité et condition qu'ils soient, de bâtir les dits moulins, leur en attribuant à cette fin le droit de banalité, faisant défenses à toutes personnes de les y troubler."

Before this edict the *banalité* was purely conventional, as it was

¹ Édits, Ordonnances Royaux, Déclarations et Arrêts du Conseil D'État du Roi concernant le Canada, Vol. I, p. 255.

in France, where it did not fall under the cognizance of the common law. The *censitaire* (tenant), on the other hand, was compelled also to have his grinding done at the mill of his seigneur, paying him, as toll for it, the fourteenth part; he was required to bake his bread in the seigneurial oven, to work at least one day in the year for his lord, and to give him one fish in every eleven that he took in that part of the river flowing by his domain.

The seigneur in France, furthermore, was absolute master over his estate, and could rent it or not, as he wished; but not so in Canada. Here, according to a royal decree of June 4, 1675, concessions too large to be peopled and handled by their owners to the advantage of the country had to be given up to new colonists: "Le roi ayant été informé que tous ses sujets qui ont passé de l'ancienne en la Nouvelle-France, ont obtenu des concessions d'une très grande quantité de terre le long des rivières du dit pays, lesquelles ils n'ont pu défricher à cause de la trop grande étendue, ce qui incommode les autres habitants du dit pays, et même empêche que d'autres François n'y passent pour s'y habiter, ce qui étant entièrement contraire aux intentions de Sa Majesté pour le dit pays et à l'application qu'elle a bien voulu donner depuis huit ou dix années pour augmenter les colonies qui y sont établies, attendu qu'il ne se trouve qu'une partie des terres le long des rivières cultivées, le reste ne l'étant point et ne pouvant l'être à cause de la trop grand étendue des dites concessions et de la foiblesse des propriétaires d'icelles, à quoi étant nécessaire de pourvoir, Sa Majesté étant en son conseil a ordonné et ordonne que par le Sieur Duchesneau, conseiller en son conseil et intendant de la justice, police et finances au dit pays, il sera fait une déclaration précise et exacte de la qualité des terres concédées aux principaux habitans du dit pays, du nombre d'arpens ou autre mesure usitée du dit pays qu'elles contiennent sur le bord des rivières et au dedans des terres, du nombre de personnes et de bestiaux employés à la culture et au défrichement d'icelles; en consequence de laquelle déclaration la moitié des terres qui avoient été concédées auparavant les dix dernières années, et qui ne se trouveront défrichées et cultivées en terres labourables ou en prés, sera retranchée des concessions et donnée aux particuliers qui se présenteront pour les cultiver et les défricher."¹

This condition, imposed on the seigneur to clear his land within a limited time on pain of forfeiting it, has been regarded as the

¹ Édits et Ordonnances, Vol. I, pp. 81, 82.

distinctive feature of Canadian feudalism. The same centralization of power, furthermore, which we have just seen in the hands of officers of the home government at the time of the dissolution of the West India Company, is clearly illustrated by the relation which the vassal proprietor held in New France to his rulers. The crown (contrary to feudal usages in France proper) maintained a strict control over not only his dealings with the State, but also his private contracts and enterprises. "A decree of the king, an edict of the council, or an ordinance of the intendant, might at any moment change old conditions, impose new ones, interfere between the lord of the manor and his grantees and modify or annul his bargains, past or present."¹ In a letter of the Marquis de Beauharnois, the Governor, to the Minister, in 1734, the bold doctrine is laid down that, "as His Majesty gives the land for nothing, he can make what conditions he pleases and change them when he pleases."² These interventions, it should be noted, were usually favorable to the *censitaire*.

And again, about half a century later (March 15, 1732), another act of the home authorities provides that those seigneuries which had remained uncleared and unoccupied should revert to the crown at the expiration of one year from the date of this Arrêt: "Le roi s'étant fait représenter en son conseil l'arrêt rendu en icelui le six juillet, mil sept cent onze, portant que les habitants de la Nouvelle-France, auxquels il auroit été accordé des terres en seigneuries, qui n'y auroient pas de domaines défrichés ni d'habitans établis, seroient tenus de les mettre en culture et d'y placer des habitants dans un an du jour de la publication du dit arrêt, passé lequel tems elles demeureroient réunies au domaine de Sa Majesté."³

The *censitaire* having once taken possession, his seigneur could not exact anything from him except the two sous per acre allowed by law for rent, unless the land changed owners, in which case the seigneur had his *lods et vents*, an impost of one-twelfth part of the value of the farm. These *lods et vents*, together with the *banalité* just noted, constituted the principal income of the lord; but it must not be supposed that he always led a life of ease or that his family lived in luxury. In truth, the domestic habits of his family during the above-named mission-period were extremely simple. We have the testimony of one of the king's agents, the intendant Denonville,

¹ Parkman, Old Régime, p. 248.

² *Ibid.* p. 251.

³ Édits et Ordonnances, Vol. I, p. 531.

who asserts, in a letter to the Minister bearing date Nov. 10, 1686, that he had seen "two young ladies, daughters of Monsieur de Saint-Ours, a gentleman of Dauphiny, reaping grain and at the plow-tail." The dowry of Magdeleine Boucher, sister of the Governor of Three Rivers, a seigneur, was set down by an author of the middle of the seventeenth century as follows: "Two hundred francs cash, four sheets, two table-cloths, six linen pieces, a mattress and coverlet, two dishes, six spoons and six pewter plates, a saucepan and a copper kettle, a table and two benches, a kneading-trough, a trunk with lock and key, a cow and two mated pigs." But we know that the Bouchers were a family of distinction, that the bride's dowry answered to her station; and in another case, the parents of the bride bind themselves to present the bridegroom with a barrel of bacon when the ships come in from France.¹

We have thus abundant proof that these young women of the *haute noblesse* helped freely in the domestic duties of the household, and also that the noble lord personally superintended his laborers in the field. The celebrated Swedish botanist already mentioned, Kalm, a man of keen observation, gives us some sketches from life of the manners and customs of the Canadians: "They [the women] are not averse to taking part in all the business of housekeeping, and I have with pleasure seen the daughters of the better sort of people, and of the Governor [of Montreal] himself, not too finely dressed and going into kitchens and cellars, to look that everything be done as it ought."²

Here we have, then, in the primary conditions of Canadian society, irrespective of the clergy, of educational institutions and of other organizations where an educated element predominated—namely, the charity foundations—causes all-powerful to produce a drift in one general direction—that is, toward a uniformity of language such as had not been known in the mother-country. In this calculation, it will be observed, we have left out of the account that special levelling agency which must exist in every new community cut off, as the Canadian settlements were, from all personal intercourse with the home-people. They felt the necessity of strong union and co-operation in battling with the savages about them, and hence were bound together with much stronger mutual

¹ Atlantic Monthly, Vol. XLVIII, p. 774. Contrat de Mariage, cited by Ferland, Notes, p. 73. Cf. also Parkman, The Old Régime in Canada, p. 382.

² Kalm, Travels in North America, translated into English by John Reinhold Forster (London, 1771); quoted by Parkman, The Old Régime, p. 390.

influences than they would have been in more propitious circumstances.

But all of these social conditions and peculiar political relations put together must have been of little moment in reforming and ameliorating the various speech-varieties of the Canadian folk compared with influences brought to bear upon them by the clergy, by the members, male and female, of those numerous Church establishments of the various religious corporations, organized by private munificence, devoted to the instruction of the young and to the spreading and strengthening of the Catholic faith.

We have already observed that the whole Canadian society rests upon a religious basis, that the priest has such a grasp upon the confidence of the common people that his spiritual authority is unquestioned and his dicta seldom go unheeded. He is not a mere figurehead behind which Society moves in devious routes and is shielded in its malpractices by the emblem of sanctimonious power, but a living presence whose force is always felt to be the most important, the most extensive and the most potent social factor in every community. To have so universal a hold on the sympathies of any people, these representatives of the Church must not only have proved themselves worthy of their calling by their devotion, self-sacrifice and godly life, but they must necessarily have controlled the early education of their people. And this brings us to a consideration of the last and most cogent force of a purely external nature that helped to abrade the dialect-irregularities and reduce to a homogeneous state the structure, forms and sound of the Canadian language.

Jacques Cartier took priests along with him on his first two voyages to the New World, but there is no evidence that they were able to impart instruction to the savages. The first evangelizer of New France, in fact, was M. Jessé Flèche, who baptized in 1610, at Port Royal, the family of an Indian chief. He was followed the next year by some Jesuits, who immediately began missions; but it was not till 1616 that the first veritable attempts at instruction were made, when the Récollet Fathers undertook to teach the elements of reading and writing to a few children of the natives. At the head of these was Frère Duplessis, who opened a school at Three Rivers, and who must be considered the forerunner of that great army of devoted and self-sacrificing men who have ever kept the fire burning on the altar of knowledge in Canada. The Récollets called the Jesuits to Quebec in 1625, but only four

years later they all returned to France when Quebec fell into the hands of the English. On the restoration of the country to the French in 1632, two Jesuit Fathers, Lejeune and Lalemant, followed De Caen across the seas, and while the former devoted himself to the instruction of the natives, the latter, for the first time in the history of the colony, gave regular formal instruction to the children of the whites. This effort must have met with immediate response on the part of the people, since only five years later we find them erecting a college which afterward became of great importance to the community, and consequently to this date (1637) must be assigned the serious beginning of public instruction in Canada. Two years later Mme. de la Peltre and the celebrated Mère Marie de l'Incarnation, whom Bossuet calls the St. Theresa of the New World, established in the same town the Ursuline convent, which was the first school for girls in the whole of New France. To the former of these noble ladies were due the inception of the scheme, and the funds to carry it out, of educating the female children of the Indians; but to the latter must be mainly attributed the success of the enterprise. She united an almost ecstatic fervor to practical talents of the highest order. Incited and supported by supernatural dreams and visions, her indomitable energy overcame all discouragement. In the vision she had while praying before the Sacrament at Tours before she entered on her work, the whole land of Canada was shown her, rugged with primeval forest, and the memory of the heavenly voice which sent her on her mission supported her under all her trials.¹

Meanwhile, Maisonneuve, the founder and Governor of Montreal, began to look for the introduction of similar educational benefits into the Ville Marie colony, and a few years later brought there la Sœur Marguerite Bourgeois, organizer in the New World of the Congrégation de Notre Dame. The story of the founding of Montreal is fresh with all that spirit which permeated and ruled the whole civilization of French Canada, which placed the learned and the unlearned, the nobleman and plebeian, the priest and the people, upon the same footing of Christian fellowship, and made each individual community a centre of united and vigorous missionary effort.² Parkman has traced with characteristic coloring and graphic effect the landing of Maisonneuve and the taking possession of the wilderness: "Maisonneuve sprang ashore and fell

¹ Dawson, Handbook for the Dominion of Canada, p. 138.

² The Jesuits in North America, p. 208.

on his knees. His followers imitated his example, and all joined their voices in enthusiastic songs of thanksgiving. An altar was raised on a pleasant spot near at hand, and Mademoiselle Mance, with Madame de la Peltrie, decorated it with a taste which was the admiration of the beholders. Now all the company gathered before the shrine. They knelt in reverent silence as the Host was raised aloft; and when the rite was over, the priest turned and addressed them: 'You are a grain of mustard-seed that shall rise and grow till its branches overshadow the earth. You are few, but your work is the work of God. His smile is on you, and your children shall fill the land.'"

In 1653 Marguerite Bourgeois gave all her property to the poor and came out to Canada with Maisonneuve—his second voyage—expressly to establish an institution for the education of the female children of the French settlers and of the savage nations of Canada. She was not born of noble family, but she had in an eminent degree that nobility which no written parchments can bestow, flowing from a heart humble and yet brave, earnestly religious and yet with a quiet enthusiasm. "To this day," says Parkman, "in crowded schoolrooms of Montreal and Quebec, fit monuments of her unobtrusive virtue, her successors instruct the children of the poor and embalm the pleasant memory of Marguerite Bourgeois."¹ She first taught the children of the Governor's family; but she had been in the country only a few years when she established (1657) a school in a stable which she had turned into a sort of school-house; but from this humble beginning there soon followed most brilliant results, since we find, in less than a century, that the *religieuses* of this Order had a dozen educational institutions of more or less importance scattered throughout the principal parishes of the colony.²

Only a month after the title of the Hundred Associates was extinguished, Mgr. de Laval established at Quebec the Grand Séminaire, and four or five years later the Petit Séminaire, from which two institutions sprang up, in 1852, as an integral part of them, the celebrated Université Laval.

A decade and a half (1647) before Quebec was provided with these institutions of learning, the Sulpitians at Montreal founded their celebrated seminary, which exists to-day as one of the most

¹ Dawson, Handbook, p. 217.—Parkman, The Jesuits in North America, p. 202.

² Chauveau, L'Instruction Publique au Canada, p. 50 seq.—De Cazes, Notes sur le Canada, p. 130 seq.

important educational establishments of the city, and still keeps its original, double aim of carrying on theological training for priests and of teaching the secular youth. The story of the origin of this institution appropriately illustrates the character of all the early establishments of education in New France, and explains many of the characteristic peculiarities of the present public education in the Province of Quebec. It was the year following the death (1635) of Champlain, the founder of French nationality in Canada, which was also the date of starting the Three Rivers colony and of establishing the first college of Jesuits in New France, that the Abbé Olier, a zealous priest, while praying in the Church of St. Germain des Prés in Paris, thought he received a divine revelation to found upon the island of Montreal a society of priests for the propagation of the true faith in the New World. Led by various mystical guidings, he formed the acquaintance of Dauversière, a receiver of taxes in Anjou, whose mind had been prepared in a similar manner. These two men resolved to found upon the island three religious orders—one of priests, to preach the true faith; another of nuns, to nurse the sick; and a third, also of nuns, to educate the young. The dream of these enthusiasts is to-day realized in the Seminary of St. Sulpice, the Hospital of the Hôtel-Dieu, and the schools of the Congregation of Notre Dame. Through the aid of a member of the nobility they purchased in 1640 the seigniory of the island of Montreal, and then, finding a suitable leader in Maisonneuve, they sent out a colony to found the city in 1642; and just a decade and a half later the celebrated seminary was established under the direction of the Abbé de Quélus, who had come to Montreal to carry out Olier's views.¹ In the archives of the Province we find the concession of a great part of the island of Montreal to the "Gentlemen of the Seminary," as they are called, under date of Dec. 17, 1640, and on Feb. 13, 1644, the ratification of the same, signed "Louis."²

The origin and earliest history of these few institutions are quite sufficient to show what their character was, and they have not changed even to this day in their purpose and dominant tendencies. Just as the Récollet Fathers in 1615 and the Jesuits in 1625 threw themselves into the missionary work, encouraged by Champlain and other leaders, so in the dark period for the French in Canada when English sway bore upon them and threatened to tear away

¹ Dawson, *Handbook for the Dominion of Canada*, p. 210.

² *Édits, Ordonnances Royaux, etc.*, Vol. I, pp. 20-26.



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from them their language and their religion and the public schools were closed because they were Catholic, the clergy again came to the rescue, and through their indomitable perseverance, their sympathy for the people, and their religious enthusiasm, raised them to a level of higher social life and united them in their efforts against the common enemy. It was in these trying circumstances, just after the conquest, when nearly all their temporal leaders had abandoned them and fled the country, that the people grouped themselves more closely than ever about their priests and bishops, loyal to the traditions of their race; and as they had learned from the press of outward circumstances to unite their forces against savage nations, now they held together about their spiritual leaders, learning from them many of their social ways, adopting their expressions, their grammar-usages and, in fine, their language. This assimilating process naturally went on in both directions, especially for the clergy who were sent out from the mother-country; that is, the clergy gave up some of their possessions and the people surrendered a part of theirs. It is particularly the phonology, the mode of pronunciation, that the people have clung to and perpetuated with a striking fidelity, while in the morphology of the language evidence is constantly at hand of the very strong influence of the clergy—that is, of the educated element of society. Their influence, through their schools, has so thoroughly penetrated the masses that one finds now an extraordinary uniformity of speech through this whole extent of French territory. The people have held their pronunciation everywhere, and the educated classes, with few exceptions, make use of it even among themselves. This is true not only of native Canadians, but also generally of the members of the clergy born and educated in France, many of whom find a home on the St. Lawrence. A few years only suffice for them to cast aside the Parisian accent and use with fluency the composite vocalization of the common folk about them.

A. M. ELLIOTT.